

# Bhaja Govindam

Attributed to *Shankara-Bhagavatpada*



TRANSLATION  
Hari Ravikumar



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Translation  
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*I humbly dedicate this work  
to my dear grandmothers*

Smt. **INDIRA VENKATESAN** (b. 1927) and  
Smt. **MALATHI RANGASWAMY** (1931–2017)  
*with much love and admiration.*

*It is what they taught me  
that guides me every single day.*





## Preface

A POPULAR SANSKRIT poem, the *Bhaja Govindam* comprises thirty-one verses set to the 'Panjarika' poetic metre and is attributed to Adi Shankara.

Often it is mistaken to be a purely devotional poem perhaps due to the title, which itself comes from the opening verse that urges us to pray to 'Govinda' ('the herder of cows,' another name for Krishna). But in fact it is a deeply philosophical poem that speaks about the futility of material prosperity and shows the path to Self-inquiry and finding Oneness in all of existence. Whatever be our life-stage, the *Bhaja Govindam* has something valuable to teach us. Every time we peruse through these verses, we get new insights into living life.

In the introduction to his lucid English translation of the *Bhaja Govindam*, C Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) says,

"Some immature critics of Indian philosophy believe...that the way of devotion is different

from the way of knowledge. The learned employ this distinction to emphasise a particular thesis on which they discourse in different contexts... When intelligence matures and lodges securely in the heart, it becomes wisdom. When that wisdom is integrated with life and issues out in action, it becomes devotion.”

This statement has been my inspiration in writing the present work, which was produced during a period I was recovering from an irksome attack of tuberculosis.

As for the presentation, I have re-arranged the thirty-one verses of the poem according to various themes and woven it in a single narrative. The inspiration for this ‘storyboard’ format is a superb Kannada article written by *Shatavadhani* Dr. R Ganesh on the *Gaha-satta-sai* (*Gatha-sapta-shati*).

There are multiple ways to re-order these verses. I have attempted to present them in what I think is a logical flow. By re-arranging the verses and giving additional explanation when useful, I feel that the overall meaning will be better grasped. When we truly understand the meaning we bring the precept into practice. That is the *raison d'être* of working on yet another English translation of this famous poem. Again, it is possible to go deeper into every verse and find many layers of meaning. I have seen

the verses in light of my experiences and presented that in simple English for a general reader.

Corresponding to the English translation, the original Sanskrit verse of the *Bhaja Govindam* (in Devanagari) has been given in the footnote. At the back of the book, there is a pronunciation guide for the Sanskrit alphabet, a note on the formatting of the verses, the original text (in the traditional order) of the *Bhaja Govindam* in Devanagari and Roman scripts, and an alphabetical index of verses.

The *Bhaja Govindam* is composed in simple Sanskrit and contains profound philosophy; so it's a great place to start for anyone who wishes to learn a few words of Sanskrit and get a brush of the depths of *Vedanta*.

#### CAVEAT

We are often attracted to the peripheral rather than the substantial. Instead of diving into the river, we prefer to stand discussing on the banks. We are more interested in the qualifications of the doctor treating us than in getting rid of our disease. It is a strange but commonly-seen phenomenon.

There is much debate about whether or not this poem was composed by Shankaracharya. There is disagreement about his period as well.

Some say that he composed a part of it and his students composed the rest. Others opine that it is the composition of Charpata Natha. All such discussions are important but are peripheral to our present purpose and outside the scope of this work. So let us put aside other pursuits and plunge headlong into the wisdom of the *Bhaja Govindam*!

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first heard verses of the *Bhaja Govindam* sung by M S Subbulakshmi and subsequently got the chance to read Rajaji's wonderful translation. But for them, this composition might not have become so popular. My humble salutations to these two jewels of Bharata!

Dr. Koti Sreekrishna, Prof. Hema Ravikumar, and Sri. Arjun Bharadwaj thoroughly reviewed the manuscript and offered excellent suggestions for improvement. My heartfelt thanks to them.

I am grateful to the trustees of *Kaveri Trust* for taking an interest to publish this work.

*Krishna Janmashtami*  
September 2020  
Bengaluru

HARI RAVIKUMAR

## Publisher's Note

AT SOME POINT in our lives, as we realise that life is momentary, we analyse various aspects – self, family, environment, responsibilities, attachments (material, relationships, position), etc.

In understanding the physical body, science has gone to great depths. Yet its understanding of the other aspects of human existence is rather limited. But philosophy, as it evolved thousands of years ago, studied the human existence in great detail.

I completed writing my autobiography *Doing Well, Feeling Happy* this June and I planned to release it in July (in time for my seventieth birthday). But that was postposed because my elder son Hari, who had to work on the final editing and design, fell sick and had to be admitted to the hospital.

Hari had non-stop fever and I wanted to understand his problem better. So I started visiting various websites based on the diagnosis made by

specialists. This triggered the idea of compiling facts and information on various organs and systems of the human body. Meanwhile, during his convalescence period, Hari happened to write a short commentary on the *Bhaja Govindam*.

*Kaveri Trust* has brought out a few publications during the last fifteen years and now, along with *Doing Well, Feeling Happy* we decided to publish these two books – *The Amazing Human Body* and *Bhaja Govindam*. The former will help understand the physical body while the latter will help rid the illusions of the mind.

I am not certain how much my autobiography will help in enhancing the well being of the readers' body and mind, but be assured that the two slim volumes accompanying it will serve that purpose.

September 2020  
Bengaluru

M V RAVIKUMAR, PHD  
Managing Trustee,  
*Kaveri Trust*

# BHAJA GOVINDAM





THERE IS A lovely story—keep aside historicity for a moment—about Shankara and his disciples walking down a narrow lane of Varanasi. They encounter an elderly tutor of Sanskrit drilling the students in his class with a certain rule of grammar. Shankara is moved by this scene and tells the teacher that he should focus on the Supreme at his stage in life and not waste time teaching the rules of grammar. This incident, it is said, inspired Shankara to compose the *Bhaja Govindam*. He sings,

*Worship Govinda! Worship Govinda!*

*Worship Govinda, O fool!*

*When your time nears,*

*all your grammar-learning<sup>1</sup> won't protect you<sup>2</sup>*

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1 The original has 'डुकृङ्करणे,' which is basically a root word and its meaning ('to do'). The story goes that the teacher was reciting this formula and his students were repeating after him, laying emphasis on form rather than content.

2 भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं

गोविन्दं भज मूढ-मते ।

सम्प्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले

नहि नहि रक्षति डुकृङ्करणे ॥ 1

Is the poet suggesting that the rules of grammar are useless? In fact, without that knowledge he could have hardly composed these verses. Without doubt, all technical knowledge has its own value.

What he is suggesting is that time flies, and before you realize it, the greater part of your life whizzes past with nary an opportunity for contemplation or for course correction. And so before it's too late, turn your mind towards a higher ideal.

*A child spends his time riveted to play  
A youth is busy attracted to young women  
An old man fritters away time in anxious thoughts  
One never devotes oneself to the Supreme Brahman<sup>3</sup>*

Not only does one's life go by quickly, it is also rather uncertain.

*A water droplet on a lotus leaf is extremely unstable  
Life too, similarly, is extremely finicky  
Know that it is plagued by disease and pride  
Everyone in the world is troubled by sorrow<sup>4</sup>*

- 
- 3 बालस्-तावत्-क्रीडा-सक्तस्-  
तरुणस्-तावत्-तरुणी-सक्तः ।  
वृद्धस्-तावच्च-चिन्ता-सक्तः  
परे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥ 7
- 4 नलिनी-दल-गत-जलम्-अति-तरलं  
तद्वज्-जीवितम्-अतिशय-चपलम् ।  
विद्धि व्याध्य-अभिमान-ग्रस्तं  
लोकं शोक-हतं च समस्तम् ॥ 4

This might sound morbid and discouraging, but isn't it a great truth of human life? *Anything can happen at any time* and if you have to even come to terms with reality, you need a certain amount of inner peace, which in turn will strengthen your objectivity in dealing with problems.

*How to develop this peace of mind?* A handful of exceptional ones achieve it perhaps by meditation or in some cases inner peace might even be inborn. But what about the rest of us? What do we do?

It is in such cases that our age-old traditions, customs, and rituals give us an anchor. Even a simple prayer might infuse a great deal of confidence if uttered sincerely.

*A little study of the Bhagavad-gita,  
drinking but a drop of water from the Ganga,  
worshipping Murari<sup>5</sup> but once –  
these will save you from a debate with Yama<sup>6</sup>*

5 मुरारि ('enemy of Mura') is an epithet for Krishna.

6 भगवद्-गीता किञ्चिद्-अधीता

गङ्गा-जल-लव-कणिका पीता ।

सकृद्-अपि येन मुरारि-समर्चा

क्रियते तस्य यमेन न चर्चा ॥ 20

'Debate with Yama' is suggestive of the afterlife, where one's *punya* and *papa* (see footnote #34) are measured. The verse basically indicates that one will be liberated from the cycles of birth and death by these actions.

Even the slightest association with something superior will influence you in a powerful way. For instance, if you get to meet your favourite athlete or actor, a single meeting suffices to inspire you; that alone gives you a moment to cherish for a life-time; you don't have to regularly meet the person in order to be influenced. Similar is the case with texts like the *Gita* or a visit to a *tirtha-kshetra*.

In this verse, the poet is a bit more explicit –

*Sing the Bhagavad-gita and  
recite the Vishnu-sahasra-nama,  
Meditate on the form of the unborn<sup>7</sup> Sripati<sup>8</sup>  
Lead your heart to the company of the wise  
Donate your wealth to the poor and needy<sup>9</sup>*

The poet now speaks of a slightly more advanced level of control –

*Pranayama<sup>10</sup>, pratyahara<sup>11</sup>,  
deep contemplation leading to wisdom that  
discerns eternal from ephemeral,*

7 The Supreme has neither birth nor death; it is always there.

8 श्रीपति ('husband of Lakshmi') is an epithet for Vishnu.

9 गेयं गीता-नाम-सहस्रं

ध्येयं श्रीपति-रूपम्-अजस्रम् ।

नेयं सज्जन-सङ्गे चित्तं

देयं दीन-जनाय च वित्तम् ॥ 27

10 प्राणायाम refers to breath control and regulation.

11 प्रत्याहार refers to control of senses and looking within.

japa<sup>12</sup>, and the means to samadhi<sup>13</sup> –  
focus on these, greatly focus on these<sup>14</sup>

OUR ANCIENT SAGES identified *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha* as the four purposes of human life. We all have desires, materialistic or otherwise. This desire is called *kama*. The means to achieve our desires—like wealth for example—is termed *artha*. We can loosely relate *kama* to ‘demand’ and *artha* to ‘supply.’ In nature, typically supply is limited but demand can be limitless. Therefore, some regulation is required. Further, just as you have certain desires, I have certain desires. *How to ensure that in the quest of my desires, I don’t end up trampling you, who are in the pursuit of your desires?* That’s where *dharma* comes in. It is the cosmic compromise or global ethic that helps maintain justice in society. It is the fundamental principle of sustainability. And thus, the prescription for everyone is to ensure that their *kama* and *artha* adhere to the rules of *dharma*. When you lead a life of moderation, adhering to

12 जप is the constant repetition of a *mantra*.

13 समाधि is an exalted state of oneness with everything.

14 प्राणायामं प्रत्याहारं

नित्यानित्य-विवेक-विचारम् ।

जाप्य-समेत-समाधि-विधानं

कुर्व-अवधानं महद्-अवधानम् ॥ 30

*dharma* at all times, the ultimate outcome is *moksha*, which is often translated as ‘liberation’ but is actually a state of everlasting happiness.<sup>15</sup>

*Bhaja Govindam*’s focus is to warn you of the many dangers of *kama* and *artha* spiralling out of control. Seen from another perspective, it cautions you not to succumb to the *ari-shad-varga* (‘group of six enemies’) – *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (infatuation), *mada* (intoxication), and *matsarya* (jealousy).

The attraction of the flesh is irresistible and therein also lies the source of destruction. Initially it gives you a great deal of pleasure but constant indulgence ultimately destroys you. Here are two verses that speak of the trappings of lust –

*Seeing a woman’s heavy breasts and navel region,  
don’t go after them, becoming infatuated  
They’re just modifications of flesh and marrow –  
mentally ponder over this, again and again*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This paragraph is taken from an essay by *Shatavadhani* Dr. R Ganesh on the fundamentals of *Sanatana-dharma*. Instead of quoting verbatim from the essay, I have taken the liberty to paraphrase the contents.

<sup>16</sup> नारी-स्तन-भर-नाभी-देशं

दृष्ट्वा मा गा मोहावेशम् ।

एतन्-मांस-वसादि-विकारं

मनसि विचिन्तय वारं वारम् ॥ 3

*He who spends his healthy days indulging in sex  
later on, in the end, has a body riddled with disease  
Although Death is the ultimate refuge to people,  
man doesn't give up his evil actions<sup>17</sup>*

The wisdom to discern the eternal from the ephemeral comes only when we understand the temporary nature of the material world.

*Youth gone, of what use is lust and perversion?  
What is the use of a dry lake, bereft of all water?  
When wealth has depleted, where is the family?  
Having realised the Truth, where is samsara?<sup>18</sup>*

Before we realise it, youth turns into old age. Physical enjoyments and indulgences become less and less effective as we grow older. At one point we reach a state where we can no longer enjoy sensual pleasures. The first half of the verse highlights this.

- 
- 17 सुखतः क्रियते रामाभोगः  
पश्चाद्-अन्त शरीरे रोगः ।  
यद्य-अपि लोके मरणं शरणं  
तद्-अपि न मुञ्चति पापाचरणम् ॥ 28
- 18 वयसि गते कः काम-विकारः  
शुष्के नीरे कः कासारः ।  
क्षीणे वित्ते कः परिवारः  
ज्ञाते तत्त्वे कः संसारः ॥ 10

संसार means 'passage,' 'world,' 'secular life,' 'mundane existence,' etc. It basically refers to the cycle of birth and death.

The moment we lose our wealth, we find that people go away from us, including our close relatives. Similarly, the moment we realise the ultimate truth, the entanglements of *samsara* go away from us. The second half of the verse speaks of this.

After physical pleasures, the next dangerous attraction is that of wealth, which is the primary (materialistic) means for us to achieve our desires. In this powerful verse, the poet speaks about a sure-shot method to remain happy at all times: to be satisfied with the fruits of one's honest labour –

*Abandon your thirst to amass wealth, O fool!*

*Be wise; mentally renounce desires*

*Whatever you gain from honest toil,*

*enjoy that wealth with a happy mind*<sup>19</sup>

No doubt wealth brings immediate happiness but the poet reminds us that the joy it can bring is only illusory; its side-effects are far worse than what it offers.

*Wealth is disaster: always remember!*

*Truly, there is not the slightest joy in it*

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19 मूढ जहीहि धनागम-तृष्णां  
 कुरु सद्-बुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम् ।  
 यत्-लभसे निज-कर्मोपात्तं  
 वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥ 2



*The wealthy man fears his own son  
This is the way of wealth everywhere<sup>20</sup>*

This being the case, what is the way out? How to move forward? The poet says,

*You worry about wife and wealth, O crazy one!  
Don't you have anyone to guide you?  
The only way in the three worlds  
is the company of the wise  
It is a boat that will take you across  
the ocean of samsara<sup>21</sup>*

The company of the wise and tutelage under the right *guru* – these are time-tested and practical ways for us to find the right path in our lives. They can motivate us to conquer our instincts and over time, become more balanced.

Not everyone has the mental strength to understand the nature of the world, take a certain stance, and stick to it with conviction. Most of us are

20 अर्थम्-अनर्थं भावय नित्यं  
नास्ति-ततः सुख-लेशः सत्यम् ।  
पुत्राद्-अपि धन-भाजां भीतिः  
सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥ 29

21 का ते कान्ता धन-गतचिन्ता  
वातुल किं तव नास्ति नियन्ता ।  
त्रि-जगति सज्जन-सङ्गतिर-एका  
भवति भवार्णव-तरणे नौका ॥ 13

products of our environment; if we spend more time with good people, we too tend to think right. If we spend more time with twisted minds, our thinking also turns wicked.

Again, not everyone has the smartness and motivation to learn on their own. A *guru* can be of great help. In this context, *guru* refers not solely to a spiritual *guru* or a sage. It can be any elder. Anyone who is more experienced in life or more knowledgeable than you are.

It is little wonder that the poet speaks about keeping good company and about the grace of the *guru*.

*The company of the wise leads to detachment  
Detachment leads to freedom from delusion  
Freedom from delusion leads to  
firm understanding of the ultimate truth,  
which in turn leads to jivanmukti<sup>22</sup>*

*O devotee, dependent on the lotus feet of the guru  
You will soon be free from the cycle of samsara*

---

22 सत्सङ्गत्वे निस्सङ्गत्वं  
निस्सङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।  
निर्मोहत्वे निश्चल-तत्त्वं  
निश्चल-तत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥ 9

जीवन्मुक्ति is the state of one who has attained the Ultimate while being alive. Such a person is called a *jivanmukta*.

*Restrain your senses and your mind  
and you will have a vision of the Supreme  
that is within your heart<sup>23</sup>*

Great masters have taught us that we can attain lasting happiness only when we give up desires. But the reality is that desires are deep-rooted in all of us.

The poet observes,

*Day and night, dusk and dawn  
winter and spring come and go  
Time plays, the years go by,  
yet the winds of desires never stops<sup>24</sup>*

Man or woman, rich or poor, educated or unlettered, healthy or sick, desire is common to all. And it seems to be never-ending.

Even in our most vulnerable moments, when we have nothing left, and when we are utterly helpless, we don't let go of our desires.

23 गुरु-चरणाम्बुज-निर्भर-भक्तः  
संसारद्-अचिराद्-भव मुक्तः ।  
सेन्द्रिय-मानस-नियमाद्-एवं  
द्रक्ष्यसि निज-हृदय-स्थं देवम् ॥ 31

24 दिन-यामिन्यौ सायं प्रातः  
शिशिर-वसन्तौ पुनर्-आयातः ।  
कालः क्रीडति गच्छत्य-आयुस्-  
तद्-अपि न मुञ्चत्य-आशा-वायुः ॥ 12

*With a fire in the front and the sun at the back,  
face hidden between the knees at night,  
hand outstretched to receive alms, living under a tree  
Yet he can't let go of the noose of desire<sup>25</sup>*

We are mere puppets in the hands of our desires. Unless we realise this truth, we will be toyed around with. Like a dog on a leash, we will be at the mercy of our desires. Sadly, even with our advancing years we don't seem to get a hint of it. It is amusing but not uncommon to see people clinging on to their desires although they stand at Death's door.

*Limbs have weakened, the head is bald  
the jaws are without any teeth;  
the old man walks holding a stick  
Yet he can't let go of the pinda of desire<sup>26</sup>*

25 अग्रे वह्निः पृष्ठे भानुः

रात्रौ चुबुक-समर्पित-जानुः ।

कर-तल-भिक्षस्तरु-तल-वासस्-

तद्-अपि न मुञ्चत्य्-आशा-पाशः ॥ 16

26 अङ्गं गलितं पलितं मुण्डं

दशन-विहीनं जातं तुण्डम् ।

वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डं

तद्-अपि न मुञ्चत्य्-आशा-पिण्डम् ॥ 15

The usage 'आशा-पिण्डम्' is noteworthy. 'पिण्डम्' literally means 'ball' but it particularly refers to the rice balls offered to the deceased by their immediate kin, typically the son, as part of the post-death rituals. The suggestion here is that even when

Another major theme in the *Bhaja Govindam* is the illusory nature of human relationships. Being attached to people is no different to clinging on to wealth or any other desire.

The poet seems quite the cynic when he says,

*As long as a man is capable of earning wealth,  
his own family is attached to him  
Later, after the body grows old, though he lives  
nobody enquires after him even in his own house*<sup>27</sup>

*As long as breath stays in the body  
everyone at home enquires after his well-being  
Once the life-breath departs from the body  
even one's wife fears the corpse*<sup>28</sup>

Indeed this is not the case in every family but the poet speaks from his experience and shares his

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facing death, people don't let go of their desires. 'आशा-पिण्डम्' (desire-*pindam*) can also mean 'lump of desires,' 'bundle of desires,' and 'futile desires.'

27 यावद्-वित्तोपार्जन-सक्तस-

तावन्-निज-परिवारो रक्तः ।

पश्चाज्-जीवति जर्जर-देहे

वार्ता कोऽपि न पृच्छति गेहे ॥ 5

28 यावत्-पवनो निवसति देहे

तावत्-पृच्छति कुशलं गेहे ।

गतवति वायौ देहापाये

भार्या बिभ्यति तस्मिन्-काये ॥ 6

observations. What he seems to be saying is that *such incidents are not uncommon in the world.*

The simple truth is that material possessions including human relationships are perishable, not permanent. They may or may not be with us throughout our lives. So it is foolish to cling on to them as if they are eternal.

*Boast not about your wealth, friends, or youth  
In the wink of an eye, Time will steal them  
Having freed yourself from the illusion of the world  
you will know the path to the state of Brahman<sup>29</sup>*

Once you realise that material possessions and human relationships are short-lived, what next? You begin to wonder what is truly eternal and also begin to question your place in the larger scheme of things.

This process of Self-inquiry is essential for one's growth. It has been greatly emphasised by spiritual masters like Ramana Maharishi. He would often tell seekers: *Ask yourself – Who am I?* That is the fundamental question; know the answer to that, and nothing else matters.

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29 मा कुरु धन-जन-यौवन-गर्वं  
हरति निमेषात्-कालः सर्वम् ।  
मायामयम्-इदम्-अखिलं हित्वा  
ब्रह्म-पदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥ 11

*Who is your beloved? Who is your son?  
 Strange is this great samsara!  
 Who do you belong to? Who are you?  
 Where have you come from?  
 Contemplate upon these truths, brother<sup>30</sup>  
 Who are you? Who am I? Where do we come from?  
 Who is my mother? Who is my father?  
 Think deeply thus,  
 realise that everything is sans essence,  
 and renounce the world as a dream<sup>31</sup>*

The poet repeats the same idea but lays stress on getting rid of the *ari-shad-varga* as a first step –

*Renounce lust, anger, greed, and attachment  
 and contemplate – Who am I?  
 Fools who have no knowledge of the Self  
 are cast into naraka<sup>32</sup>*

30 का ते कान्ता कस्-ते पुत्रः

संसारोऽयम्-अतीव विचित्रः ।

कस्य त्वं कः कुत आयातस्-

तत्त्वं चिन्तय तद्-इह भ्रातः ॥ 8

31 कस्-त्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः

का मे जननी को मे तातः ।

इति परिभावय सर्वम्-असारम्

विश्वं त्यक्त्वा स्वप्न-विचारम् ॥ 23

32 नरक (loosely translated as 'hell') is a transient place where people are punished for their immoral deeds; they stay there until they receive the full course of punishments. Then they are reborn on earth.

*and suffer the consequences*<sup>33</sup>

The poet also gives examples of *yogis* who have realised the ultimate. Describing their way of life, he says,

*He is dressed in street rags that are torn  
His path transcends punya and papa*<sup>34</sup>  
*A yogi's heart adheres to yoga  
It's ecstatic – like a child, like a mad man*<sup>35</sup>

A realised soul is joyful. This is the important trait of realising the ultimate. Uncontaminated Bliss. A *yogi* doesn't bother about how he dresses, what he eats, or where he sleeps. He has gone beyond the need to do good or bad. He is forever adhering to *yoga* and is engulfed in child-like happiness.

33 कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहं  
त्यक्त्वात्मानं भावय कोऽहम् ।  
आत्म-ज्ञान-विहीना मूढास्-  
ते पच्यन्ते नरक-निगूढाः ॥ 26

34 These terms have no English equivalents. पाप loosely translates into 'sin' but refers to that which is forbidden by *dharma*. When we act in line with *dharma*, it becomes one of पुण्य, which loosely translates into 'virtue' or 'merit.'

35 रथ्या-चर्पट-विरचित-कन्थः  
पुण्यापुण्य-विवर्जित-पन्थः ।  
योगी योग-नियोजित-चित्तो  
रमते बालोन्मत्तवद्-एव ॥ 22



Once you reduce your needs, detach yourself from physical luxuries, and learn to enjoy the small pleasures of life, the result is more comfort, more contentment.

*Living in a temple of god or at the foot of a tree,  
sleeping on the ground, wearing deerskin  
giving up all attachments and indulgences –  
with such vairagya<sup>36</sup>, how can one fail to be happy?<sup>37</sup>*

While there are a few *sadhus* among us who are spiritually awakened, there are many phony saints and god-men. This is not a recent phenomenon. Even a thousand years back, this seems to have been common. People don different costumes and appear to be saintly for the sake of their livelihood.

*Matted locks, shaven heads, plucked out hairs,  
ochre robes and a multitude of costumes  
They see and yet they fail to see, the fools!  
The manifold costumes are just to fill their tummies<sup>38</sup>*

36 वैराग्यम् refers to absence of worldly desires and passions.

37 सुर-मन्दिर-तरु-मूल-निवासः

शय्या भूतलम्-अजिनं वासः ।

सर्व-परिग्रह-भोग-त्यागः

कस्य सुखं न करोति विरागः ॥ 18

38 जटिलो मुण्डी लुञ्छित-केशः

काषायाम्बर-बहु-कृत-वेषः ।

पश्यन्-अपि च न पश्यति मूढो

ह्य-उदर-निमित्तं बहु-कृत-वेषः ॥ 14

This is yet another reminder to us that the internal is far more important than the external. To illustrate this further, the poet says,

*Visit Gangasagara<sup>39</sup>,  
observe vrata<sup>40</sup>, or perform dana<sup>41</sup>  
Everyone<sup>42</sup> agrees: if you lack wisdom,  
you won't achieve mukti  
even at the end of a hundred births<sup>43</sup>*

The poet knows only too well how difficult it is to achieve *mukti*. He has a fervent prayer to the Supreme:

*Again, birth; again, death  
again, sleep in the mother's womb  
This samsara is very difficult to cross  
Through your boundless mercy,*

---

39 गङ्गा-सागर ('Ganga-ocean') refers to the *tirtha-kshetra* (in Bengal) where the Ganga meets the Bay of Bengal.

40 व्रत means 'a vow' and it is typically a certain form of austerity taken up with a religious motive.

41 दान is an act of philanthropy driven by a selfless motive.

42 The original has मत ('opinion'), which refers to school of thought or philosophy. There is unanimous agreement that wisdom is essential for मुक्ति (ultimate release).

43 कुरुते गङ्गा-सागर-गमनं

व्रत-परिपालनम्-अथवा दानम् ।

ज्ञान-विहीनः सर्व-मतेन

मुक्तिं न भजति जन्म-शतेन ॥ 17

*O Murari, protect me*<sup>44</sup>

The poet recalls a basic truth of *Sanatana-dharma* in this verse: the same Supreme *Brahman* is in each one of us.

*In you, in me, and in everything else  
resides the same Vishnu alone  
Futile is your anger or intolerance towards me  
Always maintain equanimity  
if you wish to quickly attain Vishnu-hood*<sup>45</sup>

And what does it mean to attain Vishnu-hood? The same as realising *Brahman*. Achieving *moksha*. A sense of unbridled joy that comes from complete detachment. It comes from seeing oneness in everything.

*Friends or foes, children or relatives –  
don't bother with war or truce  
See yourself in everyone, everything*

---

44 पुनर्-अपि जननं पुनर्-अपि मरणं  
पुनर्-अपि जननी-जठरे शयनम् ।  
इह संसारे बहु-दुस्तारे  
कृपयापारे पाहि मुरारे ॥ 21

45 त्वयि मयि चान्यत्रैको विष्णुर्-  
व्यर्थं कुप्यसि मय्य-असहिष्णुः ।  
भव सम-चित्तः सर्वत्र त्वं  
वाञ्छस्य-अचिराद्-यदि विष्णुत्वम् ॥ 24

*Renounce all notions of duality*<sup>46</sup>

And ultimately, perhaps the most beautiful verse from the *Bhaja Govindam*. The poet reminds us that the ultimate purpose of life is *ananda* (Bliss). Whatever you do in your life, if you can be *genuinely happy*, that's pretty much the secret of life.

What to say of one who has attained *Brahman*? Whatever he thinks will be aligned to *rta* (cosmic order), whatever he speaks will be *satya* (truth), whatever he does will adhere to *dharma* (sustainability), and his very nature will be *ananda*.

*Whether he delights in yoga or in sensual pleasures,  
whether he delights in company or in solitude –  
For one whose being rejoices in the Brahman  
there is only Bliss, Bliss, and Bliss*<sup>47</sup>

Travelling through the *Bhaja Govindam* is like a journey to a *tirtha-kshetra* with our loved ones; it is at once enjoyable and enriching!

46 शत्रौ मित्रे पुत्रे बन्धौ  
मा कुरु यत्नं विग्रह-सन्धौ ।  
सर्वस्मिन्-अपि पर्यात्मानं  
सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदाज्ञानम् ॥ 25

47 योग-रतो वा भोग-रतो वा  
सङ्ग-रतो वा सङ्ग-विहीनः ।  
यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तं  
नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्य-एव ॥ 19

## APPENDICES



## THE SANSKRIT ALPHABET

Sanskrit is typically written in the *Deva-nāgarī* script. To write Sanskrit using the Latin alphabet, we can use one of the many transliteration schemes available; the most popular is the IAST (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration), which is has been used here.

### LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET

#### I. *SVARAS* (VOWELS)

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
<i>a</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ṛ</i>	<i>ṝ</i>	<i>ḷ</i>		<i>e</i>	<i>ai</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>au</i>	<i>aṃ</i>	<i>aḥ</i>

#### II. *AVARGĪYA-VYAÑJANAS* (CONSONANTS SET I)

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
<i>k</i>	<i>kh</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>gh</i>	<i>ṅ</i>
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
<i>c</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>jh</i>	<i>ṇ</i>
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
<i>ṭ</i>	<i>ṭh</i>	<i>ḍ</i>	<i>ḍh</i>	<i>ṇ</i>
त	थ	द	ध	न
<i>t</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>dh</i>	<i>n</i>
प	फ	ब	भ	म
<i>p</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>bh</i>	<i>m</i>

#### III. *AVARGĪYA-VYAÑJANAS* (CONSONANTS SET II)

य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह
<i>y</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>ś</i>	<i>ṣ</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>h</i>

PRONUNCIATION OF THE *SVARAS*

<i>a</i> as in <u>a</u> part	<i>ā</i> as in <u>a</u> re
<i>i</i> as in <u>i</u> n	<i>ī</i> as in <u>f</u> ree
<i>u</i> as in <u>g</u> ood	<i>ū</i> as in <u>m</u> ood
<i>ṛ</i> as in <u>r</u> hythm	<i>ṛ</i> is <u>rri</u> (rolled)
<i>e</i> as in <u>b</u> ay	<i>ai</i> as in <u>f</u> ly
<i>o</i> as in <u>o</u> ld	<i>au</i> as in <u>o</u> wl
<i>aṁ</i> as in <u>h</u> um	<i>aḥ</i> is a-huh

The letter *ḷ* has no equivalent pronunciation in English

PRONUNCIATION OF THE *VARGĪYA-VYAÑJANAS*

<i>k</i> as in <u>k</u> id	<i>g</i> as in <u>g</u> et	<i>ṇ</i> as in <u>s</u> ong
<i>c</i> as in <u>ch</u> at	<i>j</i> as in <u>j</u> oy	<i>ṇ</i> as in <u>in</u> ch
<i>ṭ</i> as in <u>t</u> oy	<i>ḍ</i> as in <u>d</u> ay	<i>ṇ</i> as in <u>e</u> nd
<i>t</i> as in <u>th</u> in	<i>d</i> as in <u>th</u> is	<i>n</i> as in <u>n</u> ow
<i>p</i> as in <u>p</u> ub	<i>b</i> as in <u>b</u> ag	<i>m</i> as in <u>m</u> ap

PRONUNCIATION OF THE *AVARGĪYA-VYAÑJANAS*

<i>y</i> as in <u>y</u> am	<i>r</i> as in <u>r</u> ig
<i>l</i> as in <u>l</u> eg	<i>v</i> as in <u>v</u> an
<i>ś</i> as in <u>sh</u> y	<i>s</i> as in <u>s</u> it
<i>h</i> as in <u>h</u> ow	

*kh, gh, ch, jh, ṭh, ḍh, th, dh, ph, bh*  
are aspirated versions of  
*k, g, c, j, ṭ, ḍ, t, d, p, b*

The letter *ṣ* has no equivalent pronunciation in English. It like the sound we get when we pronounce *ś* with the bottom of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth.



## NOTE ON THE FORMATTING

All verses are presented in four lines followed by the verse number. On the left side (even pages), we have given the verses in the Devanāgarī script and the same verses are given in the Roman script on the right side (odd pages).

In the cases where splitting the *sandhi* doesn't lead to a violation of the poetic metre, the *sandhi* has been split and hyphens have been added to separate one word from another. The same has been followed for splitting *samāśas* as well. For example,

नारीस्तनभरनाभीदेशम्  
*nārīstanabharanābhīdeśam*  
has been given as

नारी-स्तन-भर-नाभी-देशम्  
*nārī stana bhara nābhī deśam*

नलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलम्  
*nalinīdalagatajalamatitaralam*  
has been given as

नलिनी-दल-गत-जलम्-अति-तरलम्  
*nalini dala gata jalam ati taralam*

In addition, in the Devanāgarī text, the instances of *svara-sandhis* like *savarṇa-dīrgha*, *guṇa*, and *vṛddhi* have been underlined. For example,

धन + आगम = धनागम  
*dhana āgama dhanāgama*

कर्म + उपात्तम् = कर्मोपात्तम्  
*karma upāttam karmopāttam*

## भज गोविन्दम्

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं  
 गोविन्दं भज मूढ-मते ।  
 सम्प्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले  
 नहि नहि रक्षति दुकृङ्करणे ॥ 1

मूढ जहीहि धनागम-तृष्णां  
 कुरु सद्-बुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम् ।  
 यल्लभसे निज-कर्मापातं  
 वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥ 2

नारी-स्तन-भर-नाभी-देशं  
 दृष्ट्वा मा गा मोहावेशम् ।  
 एतन्-मांस-वसादि-विकारं  
 मनसि विचिन्तय वारं वारम् ॥ 3

नलिनी-दल-गत-जलम्-अति-तरलं  
 तद्वज्-जीवितम्-अतिशय-चपलम् ।  
 विद्धि व्याध्य-अभिमान-ग्रस्तं  
 लोकं शोक-हतं च समस्तम् ॥ 4

## Bhaja Govindam

bhaja govindam bhaja govindam  
 govindam bhaja mūḍha-mate ।  
 samprāpte sannihite kālē  
 nahi nahi rakṣati dukṛt-karaṇe ॥ 1

mūḍha jahīhi dhanāgama-tṛṣṇām  
 kuru sad-buddhiṃ manasi vitṛṣṇām ।  
 yal-labhase nija-karmopāttam  
 vittam tena vinodaya cittam ॥ 2

nārī-stana-bhara-nābhī-deśam  
 drṣṭvā mā gā mohāveśam ।  
 etan-māṃsa-vasādi-vikāram  
 manasi vicintaya vāram vāram ॥ 3

nalinī-dala-gata-jalam-ati-taralam  
 tadvaj-jīvitam-atiśaya-capalam ।  
 viddhi vyādhy-abhimāna-grastam  
 lokam śoka-hatam ca samastam ॥ 4

यावद्-वित्तोपाज्जन-सक्तस्-  
 तावन्-निज-परिवारो रक्तः ।  
 पश्चाज्-जीवति जर्जर-देहे  
 वार्ता कोऽपि न पृच्छति गेहे ॥ 5

यावत्-पवनो निवसति देहे  
 तावत्-पृच्छति कुशलं गेहे ।  
 गतवति वायौ देहापाये  
 भार्या बिभ्यति तस्मिन्-काये ॥ 6

बालस्-तावत्-क्रीडा-सक्तस्-  
 तरुणस्-तावत्-तरुणी-सक्तः ।  
 वृद्धस्-तावच्-चिन्ता-सक्तः  
 परे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥ 7

का ते कान्ता कस्-ते पुत्रः  
 संसारोऽयम्-अतीव विचित्रः ।  
 कस्य त्वं कः कुत आयातस्-  
 तत्त्वं चिन्तय तद्-इह भ्रातः ॥ 8

सत्सङ्गत्वे निस्सङ्गत्वं  
 निस्सङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।  
 निर्मोहत्वे निश्चल-तत्त्वं  
 निश्चल-तत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥ 9

yāvad-vittopārjana-saktas-  
 tāvan-nija-parivāro raktaḥ ।  
 paścāj-jīvati jarjara-dehe  
 vārtāṃ ko'pi na pṛcchati gehe ॥ 5

yāvat-pavano nivasati dehe  
 tāvat-pṛcchati kuśalaṃ gehe ।  
 gatavati vāyau dehāpāye  
 bhāryā bibhyati tasmin-kāye ॥ 6

bālas-tāvat-kṛīḍā-saktas-  
 taruṇas-tāvat-taruṇī-saktaḥ ।  
 vṛddhas-tāvac-cintā-saktaḥ  
 pare brahmaṇi ko'pi na saktaḥ ॥ 7

kā te kāntā kas-te putraḥ  
 saṃsāro'yam-atīva vicitraḥ ।  
 kasya tvaṃ kaḥ kuta āyātas-  
 tattvaṃ cintaya tad-iha bhrātaḥ ॥ 8

satsaṅgatve nissaṅgatvaṃ  
 nissaṅgatve nirmohatvam ।  
 nirmohatve niścala-tattvaṃ  
 niścala-tattve jīvanmuktiḥ ॥ 9

वयसि गते कः काम-विकारः  
 शुष्के नीरे कः कासारः ।  
 क्षीणे वित्ते कः परिवारः  
 ज्ञाते तत्त्वे कः संसारः ॥ 10

मा कुरु धन-जन-यौवन-गर्वं  
 हरति निमेषात्-कालः सर्वम् ।  
 मायामयम्-इदम्-अखिलं हित्वा  
 ब्रह्म-पदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥ 11

दिन-यामिन्यौ सायं प्रातः  
 शिशिर-वसन्तौ पुनर्-आयातः ।  
 कालः क्रीडति गच्छत्य्-आयुस्-  
 तद्-अपि न मुञ्चत्य्-आशा-वायुः ॥ 12

का ते कान्ता धन-गतचिन्ता  
 वातुल किं तव नास्ति नियन्ता ।  
 त्रि-जगति सज्जन-सङ्गतिर-एका  
 भवति भवार्णव-तरणे नौका ॥ 13

जटिलो मुण्डी लुञ्छित-केशः  
 काषायाम्बर-बहु-कृत-वेषः ।  
 पश्यन्-अपि च न पश्यति मूढो  
 ह्य-उदर-निमित्तं बहु-कृत-वेषः ॥ 14

vayasi gate kaḥ kāma-vikāraḥ  
 śuṣke nīre kaḥ kāsāraḥ ।  
 kṣīṇe vitte kaḥ parivāraḥ  
 jñāte tattve kaḥ saṃsāraḥ ॥ 10

mā kuru dhana-jana-yauvana-garvaṃ  
 harati nimeṣāt-kālaḥ sarvaṃ ।  
 māyāmayam-idam-akhilaṃ hitvā  
 brahma-padaṃ tvaṃ praviśa veditvā ॥ 11

dina-yāminyau sāyaṃ prātaḥ  
 śīśira-vasantau punar-āyātaḥ ।  
 kālaḥ krīḍati gacchaty-āyus-  
 tad-api na muñcaty-āśā-vāyuh ॥ 12

kā te kāntā dhana-gatacintā  
 vātula kiṃ tava nāsti niyantā ।  
 tri-jagati sajjana-saṅgatir-ekā  
 bhavati bhavārṇava-taraṇe naukā ॥ 13

jaṭilo muṇḍī luñchita-keśaḥ  
 kāśāyāmbara-bahu-kṛta-veśaḥ ।  
 paśyann-api ca na paśyati mūḍho  
 hy-udara-nimittaṃ bahu-kṛta-veśaḥ ॥ 14

अङ्गं गलितं पलितं मुण्डं  
 दशन-विहीनं जातं तुण्डम् ।  
 वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डं  
 तद्-अपि न मुञ्चत्य्-आशा-पिण्डम् ॥ 15

अग्रे वह्निः पृष्ठे भानुः  
 रात्रौ चुबुक-समर्पित-जानुः ।  
 कर-तल-भिक्षस्-तरु-तल-वासस्-  
 तद्-अपि न मुञ्चत्य्-आशा-पाशः ॥ 16

कुरुते गङ्गा-सागर-गमनं  
 व्रत-परिपालनम्-अथवा दानम् ।  
 ज्ञान-विहीनः सर्व-मतेन  
 मुक्तिं न भजति जन्म-शतेन ॥ 17

सुर-मन्दिर-तरु-मूल-निवासः  
 शय्या भूतलम्-अजिनं वासः ।  
 सर्व-परिग्रह-भोग-त्यागः  
 कस्य सुखं न करोति विरागः ॥ 18

योग-रतो वा भोग-रतो वा  
 सङ्ग-रतो वा सङ्ग-विहीनः ।  
 यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तं  
 नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्य्-एव ॥ 19



aṅgaṃ galitaṃ palitaṃ muṇḍaṃ  
 daśana-vihīnaṃ jātaṃ tuṇḍaṃ ।  
 vṛddho yāti grhītvā daṇḍaṃ  
 tad-api na muñcaty-āśā-piṇḍaṃ ॥ 15

agre vahniḥ pṛṣṭhe bhānuḥ  
 rātrau cubuka-samarpita-jānuḥ ।  
 kara-tala-bhikṣas-taru-tala-vāsas-  
 tad-api na muñcaty-āśā-pāśaḥ ॥ 16

kurute gaṅgā-sāgara-gamaṇaṃ  
 vrata-paripālanam-athavā dānaṃ ।  
 jñāna-vihīnaḥ sarva-matena  
 muktiṃ na bhajati janma-śatena ॥ 17

sura-mandira-taru-mūla-nivāsaḥ  
 śayyā bhūtaḥ-ajinaṃ vāsaḥ ।  
 sarva-parigraha-bhoga-tyāgaḥ  
 kasya sukhaṃ na karoti virāgaḥ ॥ 18

yoga-rato vā bhoga-rato vā  
 saṅga-rato vā saṅga-vihīnaḥ ।  
 yasya brahmaṇi ramate cittaṃ  
 nandati nandati nandaty-eva ॥ 19

भगवद्-गीता किञ्चिद्-अधीता  
 गङ्गा-जल-लव-कणिका पीता ।  
 सकृद्-अपि येन मुरारि-समर्चा  
 क्रियते तस्य यमेन न चर्चा ॥ 20

पुनर्-अपि जननं पुनर्-अपि मरणं  
 पुनर्-अपि जननी-जठरे शयनम् ।  
 इह संसारे बहु-दुस्तारे  
 कृपयापारे पाहि मुरारे ॥ 21

रथ्या-चर्पट-विरचित-क्वन्थः  
 पुण्यापुण्य-विवर्जित-पन्थः ।  
 योगी योग-नियोजित-चित्तो  
 रमते बालोन्मत्तवद्-एव ॥ 22

कस्-त्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः  
 का मे जननी को मे तातः ।  
 इति परिभावय सर्वम्-असारम्  
 विश्वं त्यक्त्वा स्वप्न-विचारम् ॥ 23

त्वयि मयि चान्यत्रैको विष्णुर्-  
 व्यर्थं कुप्यसि मय्य्-असहिष्णुः ।  
 भव सम-चित्तः सर्वत्र त्वं  
 वाञ्छस्य-अचिराद्-यदि विष्णुत्वम् ॥ 24

bhagavad-gītā kiñcid-adhītā  
 gaṅgā-jala-lava-kaṇikā pītā ।  
 sakṛd-api yena murāri-samarcā  
 kriyate tasya yamena na carcā ॥ 20

punar-api jananaṃ punar-api maraṇaṃ  
 punar-api jananī-jaṭhare śayanaṃ ।  
 iha saṃsāre bahu-dustāre  
 kṛpayāpāre pāhi murāre ॥ 21

rathyā-carpaṭa-viracita-kanthaḥ  
 puṇyāpuṇya-vivarjita-panthaḥ ।  
 yogī yoga-niyojita-citto  
 ramate bālonmattavad-eva ॥ 22

kas-tvaṃ ko'haṃ kuta āyātaḥ  
 kā me janani ko me tātaḥ ।  
 iti paribhāvaya sarvam-asāram  
 viśvaṃ tyaktvā svapna-vicāram ॥ 23

tvayi mayi cānyatraiko viṣṇur-  
 vyarthaṃ kupyasi mayy-asahiṣṇuḥ ।  
 bhava sama-cittaḥ sarvatra tvaṃ  
 vāñchasy-acirād-yadi viṣṇutvam ॥ 24

शत्रौ मित्रे पुत्रे बन्धौ  
 मा कुरु यत्नं विग्रह-सन्धौ ।  
 सर्वस्मिन्-अपि पश्यात्मानं  
 सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदाज्ञानम् ॥ 25

कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहं  
 त्यक्त्वात्मानं भावय कोऽहम् ।  
 आत्म-ज्ञान-विहीना मूढास्-  
 ते पच्यन्ते नरक-निगूढाः ॥ 26

गेयं गीता-नाम-सहस्रं  
 ध्येयं श्रीपति-रूपम्-अजस्रम् ।  
 नेयं सज्जन-सङ्गे चित्तं  
 देयं दीन-जनाय च वित्तम् ॥ 27

सुखतः क्रियते रामाभोगः  
 पश्चाद्-अन्त शरीरे रोगः ।  
 यद्य्-अपि लोके मरणं शरणं  
 तद्-अपि न मुञ्चति पापाचरणम् ॥ 28

अर्थम्-अनर्थं भावय नित्यं  
 नास्ति-ततः सुख-लेशः सत्यम् ।  
 पुत्राद्-अपि धन-भाजां भीतिः  
 सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥ 29

śatrau mitre putre bandhau  
 mā kuru yatnaṃ vighraha-sandhau ।  
 sarvasminn-api paśyātmānaṃ  
 sarvatrotsrja bhedājñānam ॥ 25

kāmaṃ krodhaṃ lobhaṃ mohaṃ  
 tyaktvātmānaṃ bhāvaya ko'ham ।  
 ātma-jñāna-vihīnā mūḍhās-  
 te pacyante naraka-nigūḍhāḥ ॥ 26

geyaṃ gītā-nāma-sahasraṃ  
 dhyeyaṃ śrīpati-rūpam-ajasram ।  
 neyaṃ sajjana-saṅge cittaṃ  
 deyaṃ dīna-janāya ca vittam ॥ 27

sukhataḥ kriyate rāmābhogaḥ  
 paścāddh-anta śarīre rogaḥ ।  
 yady-api loke maraṇaṃ śaraṇaṃ  
 tad-api na muñcati pāpācaraṇam ॥ 28

artham-anarthaṃ bhāvaya nityaṃ  
 nāsti-tataḥ sukha-leśaḥ satyam ।  
 putrād-api dhana-bhājāṃ bhītīḥ  
 sarvatraisā vihitā rītiḥ ॥ 29

प्राणायामं प्रत्याहारं  
 नित्यानित्य-विवेक-विचारम् ।  
 जाप्य-समेत-समाधि-विधानं  
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गुरु-चरणाम्बुज-निर्भर-भक्तः  
 संसाराद्-अचिराद्-भव मुक्तः ।  
 सेन्द्रिय-मानस-नियमाद्-एवं  
 द्रक्ष्यसि निज-हृदय-स्थं देवम् ॥ 31

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भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं  
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 नाम-स्मरणाद्-अन्यम्-उपायं  
 नहि पश्यामो भव<sub>न्</sub>ब्धि-तरणे ॥

prāṇāyāmaṃ pratyāhāraṃ  
 nityānitya-viveka-vicāraṃ ।  
 jāpya-sameta-samādhi-vidhānaṃ  
 kurv-avadhānaṃ mahad-avadhānam ॥ 30

guru-caraṇāmbuja-nirbhara-bhaktāḥ  
 saṃsārād-acirād-bhava muktaḥ ।  
 sendriya-mānasa-niyamād-evam  
 draṅsyasi nija-hṛdaya-sthaṃ devam ॥ 31

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bhaja govindaṃ bhaja govindaṃ  
 govindaṃ bhaja mūḍha-mate ।  
 nāma-smaraṇād-anyam-upāyaṃ  
 nahi paśyāmo bhavābdhi-taraṇe ॥

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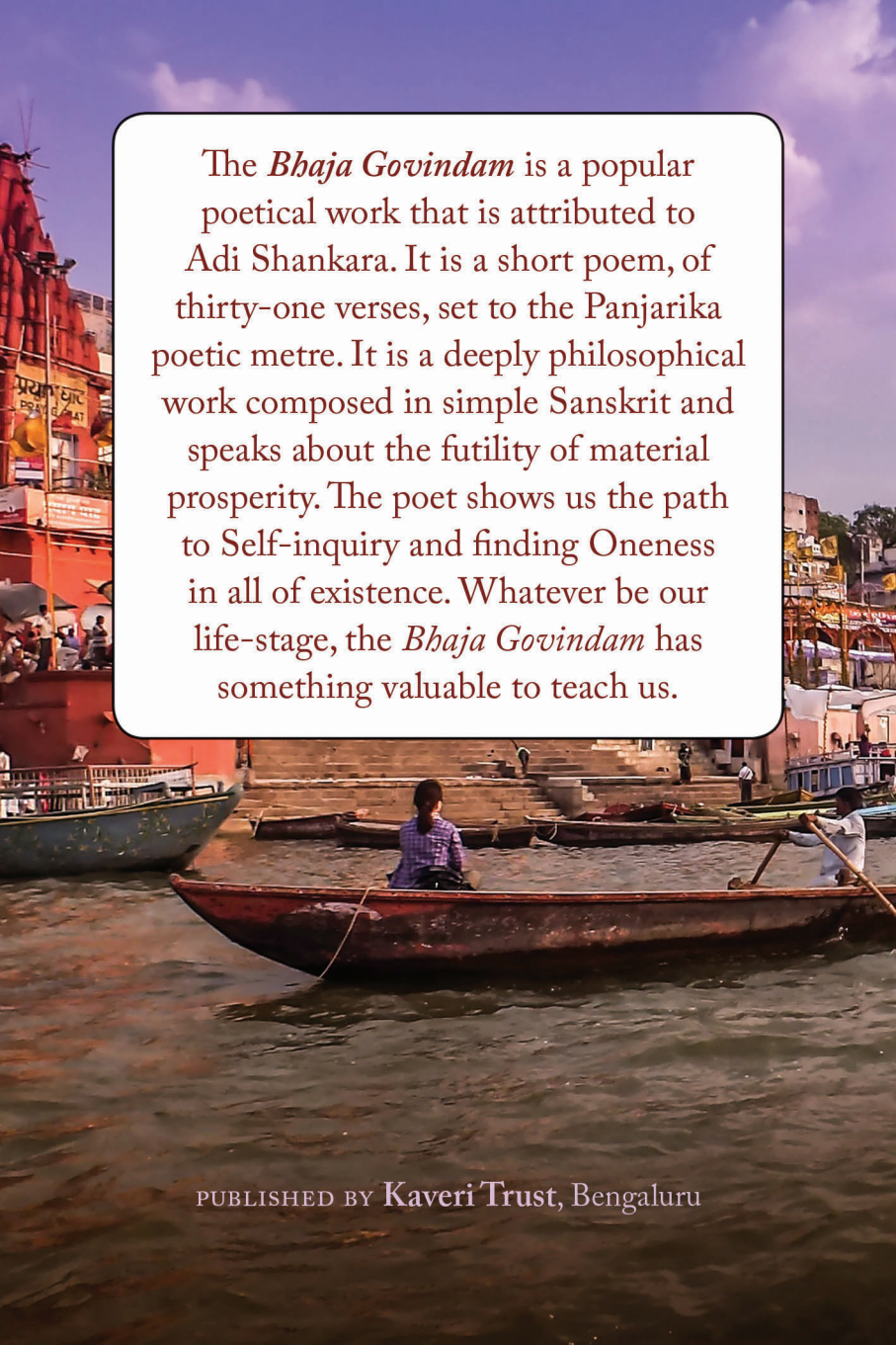
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The *Bhaja Govindam* is a popular poetical work that is attributed to Adi Shankara. It is a short poem, of thirty-one verses, set to the Panjarika poetic metre. It is a deeply philosophical work composed in simple Sanskrit and speaks about the futility of material prosperity. The poet shows us the path to Self-inquiry and finding Oneness in all of existence. Whatever be our life-stage, the *Bhaja Govindam* has something valuable to teach us.

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